

Last week the House overwhelmingly approved a measure to put a new round of sanctions on Iran. If this measure passes the Senate, the United States could no longer do business with anyone who sold refined petroleum products to Iran or helped them develop their ability to refine their own petroleum. The sad thing is that many of my colleagues voted for this measure because they felt it would deflect a military engagement with Iran. I would put the question to them, how would Congress react if another government threatened our critical trading partners in this way? Would we not view it as asking for war?

This policy is pure isolationism. It is designed to foment war by cutting off trade and diplomacy.

Too many forget that the quagmire in Iraq began with an embargo. Sanctions are not diplomacy. They are a precursor to war and an embarrassment to a country that pays lip service to free trade. It is ironic that people who decry isolationism support actions like this.

If a foreign government attempted to isolate the US economically, cut off our supply of gasoline, or starve us to death, would it cause Americans to admire that foreign entity? Or would we instead unite under the flag for the survival of our country?

We would not tolerate foreign covert operations fomenting regime change in our government. Yet our CIA has been meddling in Iran for decades. Of course Iranians resent this. In fact, many in Iran still resent the CIA's involvement in overthrowing their democratically elected leader in 1953. The answer is not to cut off gasoline to the Iranian people. The answer is to

stay out of their affairs and trade with them honestly. If our operatives were no longer in Iran, they would no longer be available as scapegoats for the regime to, rightly or wrongly, blame for every bad thing that happens. As bad as other regimes may be, it is up to their own people to deal with them so they can achieve true self-determination. When foreigners instigate regime change, the new government they institute is always perceived as serving the interest of the overthrowing country, not the people. Thus we take the blame for bad governance twice. Instead we should stay out of their affairs altogether.

With the exception of the military industrial complex, we all want a more peaceful world. Many are hysterical about the imminent threat of a nuclear Iran. Here are the facts: Iran has never been found out of compliance with the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) they signed. However, being surrounded by nuclear powers one can understand why they might want to become nuclear capable if only to defend themselves and to be treated more respectfully. After all, we don't sanction nuclear capable countries. We take diplomatic negotiations a lot more seriously, and we frequently send money to them instead. The non-nuclear countries are the ones we bomb. If Iran was attempting to violate the non-proliferation treaty, they could hardly be blamed, since US foreign policy gives them every incentive to do so.